

Indiana's WIOA Combined Plan Modifications and Updates on Progress

Executive Summary

March 2022

During the first two years of implementing the Indiana WIOA Combined Plan much was accomplished. Indiana successfully redesigned and implemented 66 programs of study with career pathways inside of the Career and Technical Education system. The Department of Workforce Development implemented a Virtual Client Engagement (VCE) tool while the local regions implemented virtual access for career engagement with the One Stop (WorkOne) Centers. The VCE creates a universal door into the One Stop system. It provides real-time access to workforce specialists who can assess customer needs and then immediately connect/refer the customer across all partners. Data sharing practices across partners also showed significant progress with the signing of the Applied Workforce system Data Project Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This lays the foundation for additional data sharing agreements across partners. In addition, the partners developed a cross agencies staff training model and will be working to build curriculum and a rollout plan in the coming year.

Just as the Indiana WIOA Combined Plan was approved the pandemic hit the State, and with it came unprecedented numbers of people becoming unemployed, requiring financial supports from unemployment insurance, and needing quick access to supportive services. The pandemic had a fundamental impact on all areas of work in the Plan and disrupted the anticipated timelines. The pandemic also created opportunities for innovation. With the pandemic came an influx of CARES, Rapid Response, and Employment Training funding. The additional dollars combined with State funding allowed for more Hoosiers to upskill than ever before. In addition, the speedy implementation of virtual service offerings on the ground and at the State level allowed the workforce system to serve customers safely and effectively with flexible and agile approaches.

Below are some highlights of progress on the Pillars of the WIOA Combined Plan:

- **Data Sharing** – Opportunity to better understand who is being served, by what program, and where.
 - *Success with Applied Workforce Data System Project and MOU lays the foundation;*
 - *Need to continue to work toward cross agency/programs Data Charter;*
 - *Over next two years research ROI models;*
 - *Career and Technical Education created Equity Labs which allow for strategic analysis of disaggregated data producing insights for equity and inclusion; and*
 - *The early childhood team at FSSA developed a new tool to provide Hoosier citizens with ability to see the number of childcare seats available throughout the state.*
- **Co-enrollment** – No single program has the resources necessary to meet everyone's needs.
 - *Policy released by DWD for strategic Co-Enrollment & Common Exit across partners.*
 - *Workforce Ready Grant funding given to Regional Boards*

- *Vocational Rehabilitation in collaboration with the WIOA Youth program expanded dollars through MOU between VR and DWD to support students with disabilities participating in Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG).*
 - *In partnership with Division of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA), implemented two early adopter Individual Placement and Support sites. IPS is an evidenced-based employment model for individuals with mental health conditions.*
 - *Focus on serving customers who meet Priority of Service as outlined in WIOA and in State DWD Policy.*
 - *Co-enrollment can range from being a reportable individual in a specific program up to and including full activation as a participant in the program.*
- **Co-location** – Improve customer service by reducing barriers for individuals accessing services by providing opportunities to get those services through a “no wrong door” approach.
- *Local regions have made progress on co-location with partner programs.*
 - *COVID had significant impact on how we think about and implement co-location strategies.*
 - *Virtual strategies for service delivery implemented at State & Local levels.*
- **Cross-training** – Creating better awareness of programs and ways to provide services across programs will help serve Hoosiers.
- *Model for cross training developed (in partnership with core partner agencies).*
 - *Workforce Board Member Training was developed and will be implemented in 2022.*
 - *Vocational Rehabilitation staff were trained and practices modified to support inclusive service delivery.*
 - *Trained designated Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to specialize in serving participants seeking postsecondary training.*
- **Employer Engagement** – We want to increase both the quality and quantity of engagement with employers.
- *Influx of funds to support employers with Next Level Jobs, increase year over year of employers served.*
 - *Helping employers develop and implement sustainable work-based learning programs as a way to attract and retain talent will be priority over next two years.*

Goal 1: Focus on meeting the individual needs of Hoosiers.

Strategy 1.1: Indiana will develop career pathways that have multiple points of entry mapping towards a trajectory for career advancement and sustainability. These career pathways will be scaffolded to have a sequence of valuable, stackable credentials that signify crucial skill development. Each of our priority sectors will have career pathways that correspond with middle-skills jobs.

Completion Date: Changed from 2020 to 2021; strategy completed

Update/Progress: Indiana has spent the past two years redesigning the career pathways that are a part of the state's Career and Technical Education system. The state has redesigned 66 pathways that now have multiple exit points for learners to begin their career or matriculate to postsecondary education with a reduced time to complete. Throughout 2020 and the spring of 2021, 53 of the 66 pathways were redesigned and then made available for students to begin using in the 2021 – 2022 school year. The remaining 13 pathways will become available for use in the 2022 – 2023 school year. These redesigned pathways are more intentionally designed to align to degree programs at the state's two Perkins-eligible postsecondary institutions, Ivy Tech Community College and Vincennes University.

This redesign was a primary component of Indiana's Combined Plan submission in 2020 and was highlighted by AdvanceCTE as a "Promising Practice." The redesign is also aligned with one of Indiana's key state-funded workforce programs, the Next Level Jobs Workforce Ready Grant. Now that these programs are available for secondary and postsecondary students, the state intends to focus on integrating these programs more intentionally in adult education programs to ensure better alignment across the entire education and workforce continuum.

Strategy 1.2: Indiana will develop and implement a comprehensive communications plan to raise awareness regarding the long-term career benefits and multiple options to pursuing postsecondary education and lifelong learning.

Completion Date: 2022

Update/Progress: Shortly after the Governor's Workforce Cabinet approved the state's Combined Plan, *A Better Future for Every Hoosier*, the nation and world were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the Governor along with education and workforce leaders across the state launched the state's *Rapid Recovery for a Better Future* plan (Rapid Recovery Plan) in June 2020. Part of this plan included the establishment of the YourNextStepIN.org website utilizing philanthropic dollars awarded to the state to help develop and launch a communications campaign regarding the connectedness between education and careers. On the website, individuals can access a number of resources regarding education, workforce, and social service supports. At the same time, Indiana leveraged CARES Act funding through the state's Economic Relief Taskforce to promote initiatives within the Rapid Recovery Plan through numerous communication channels.

The state has embarked upon trying to better understand how to communicate the value of lifelong learning and how quality credentials beyond a high school diploma connect to careers. This has been done in part because of growing shifts in the attitude of some individuals toward the value of postsecondary education through the pandemic. As such, Indiana is revisiting strategies that were developed for a broad communication campaign prior to the pandemic and will be moving some of those strategies forward throughout 2022 and the remainder of the state plan implementation.

Strategy 1.3: We will increase the co-enrollment of those served into applicable social and talent development programs to address the associated costs of higher education and training and supportive services.

Completion Date: 2023

Update/Progress: To increase co-enrollment, DWD developed strategic communications to target unemployment insurance customers and specific types of engagement that might be helpful to assist the claimant on their pathway back to work. Resources like Adult Education, training, and job search were strategically shared to engage participants based on their needs.

Regional partners at the local level continue to work to establish robust relationships with FSSA as we continue to work towards co-enrollment strategies. Regional partners have engaged in cross training of services to increase knowledge base and share in workforce development strategy development through ongoing partner meetings and collaborations.

Co-enrollment across Wagner Peyser, WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker (DLW), and TAA is already established. Similarly, co-enrollment strategies across homeless Veterans' programming, Wagner Peyser, WIOA Adult, WIOA DLW, and JVSG are also established practices.

Title II partners at both the State and local Workforce Board levels have established relationships with the school systems in their areas to refer and deliver services to students exiting without a secondary diploma. Implementation of HB 1313 has begun. The legislation focuses on DWD doing outreach to all high school completers with alternative diplomas from 2007 forward. This population will be educated on the training and services available to them to enter or advance in the workforce.

Virtual Services and technology are paving the way for better and more seamless referrals and coordination between partners, programs and resources. These virtual services at the State and local level expand access and create a "no wrong door" for entering the One Stop system. The State's virtual solutions provide accessibility to all services. We will continue to work toward a common intake and perhaps even a common case management system across all partners.

DWD recently issued a co-enrollment policy encouraging strategic co-enrollment. This approach facilitates service delivery alignment and encourages the braiding of resources to address the training and employment needs of job seekers and business customers at the local level. Co-enrollment should be customer-centered and driven by the individual's unique barriers to employment. Strategic co-enrollment ensures the participant receives all appropriate services needed for positive outcomes.

Expanding co-enrollment efforts will serve to maximize the efficiency and impact of each program through responsible stewardship of funds. Ensuring that individuals are being served through the programs most appropriate for their needs, can lead to a reduction in the duplication of services, improved outcomes, and an increase in the number of participants served through each funding stream. The partners are keeping in mind that co-enrollment can range from being a reportable individual in a specific program up to and including full activation as a participant in the program.

The strategic co-enrollment policy was developed in addition to the existing mandatory co-enrollment guidance for TAA/WIOA DW. Both policies can be found on DWD's active policy site:

<https://www.in.gov/dwd/compliance-policy/policy/active/>.

Strategy 1.4: As part of our efforts to scale career coaching and navigation, we will include mentorship and advising around the multiple options and benefits of higher education and lifelong learning. This process will also include working with the constituent to identify successful prior learning experiences for which they may obtain credit, such as competencies, on-the-job training or internships, military training experiences, certifications, and skills. Career coaching will also encompass ways to address short-term associated costs and the long-term economic benefits.

Completion Date: Changed from 2021 to 2023

Update/Progress: Indiana has recognized the value of career coaching and navigation, especially throughout the pandemic. As part of the state's Rapid Recovery Plan, an investment of \$3M was made to help scale a new Career Coaching and Employer Connections model throughout the state's community college system. This \$3M investment from the state also triggered a \$3M investment from philanthropy geared at scaling and sustaining that model across each of Ivy Tech Community College's campuses. Additionally, with the help of InvestEd, we were able to provide direct support to individuals that were interested in learning more about the state's Workforce Ready Grant program, its expanded eligibility during the pandemic, and how those programs connected to additional postsecondary education and/or careers. Part of the work through Ivy Tech Community College also included direct one-on-one support for individuals seeking career advice through InsideTrack. The state has continued to partner with Skillful Indiana on the Governor's Coaching Corps to cross-train career coaches that are embedded throughout state and federal programs to better understand how they can leverage their programs to help those they serve get on a path toward the careers they want.

Additionally, the state has begun to rethink how we communicate available programs and occupations to those receiving unemployment insurance benefits, through the Applied Workforce Data System project. While this project is currently focused on individuals that are unemployed, the target populations this system will serve will continue to expand throughout 2022 and 2023. By utilizing data from education and workforce agencies throughout the state, we can better understand services, programs, and occupations that are available to Hoosiers and tailor recommended services to the individual. Currently, this is being done through banner ads within an unemployment insurance claimants homepage. However, this work will continue to evolve into an online portal that may be accessed by any Hoosier trying to find programs or occupations tailored to a number of factors specific to them.

Beginning in 2020, all Adult Education grantees were required to have an Academic & Career Coach on staff and available for all students. DWD created a list of skills these staff must have and a job description of minimum duties they must perform. Target professional development for coaches has been developed along with a DWD Career Coach resource page. Students are required to complete

career assessments in Indiana Career Explorer during their first 12 hours of class attendance. These tools are used to guide individuals to their next step in education and or the workforce.

Strategy 1.5: In an effort to better align the state's workforce development and social service systems, Indiana will examine potential ways to target the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant towards two objectives for those who fall between 151% and 200% of the federal poverty line

Completion Date: 2024

Update/Progress: This will be addressed over the next two years.

Goal 2: Integrate state systems to facilitate greater access to information, resources, and services for constituents, businesses, state personnel, career coaches or navigators, and case managers.

Strategy 2.1: Through the development and implementation of the Combined Plan, state agencies will identify areas of eligibility and services of our state and federal programs. Additionally, wherever possible, we will reduce state administrative processes to align and simplify eligibility identification and reporting.

Completion Date: Changed from 2020 to 2023

Update/Progress: This will be addressed over the next two years.

Strategy 2.2: To facilitate the reduction of administrative processes, we will increase and enhance interagency Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to connect social services with workforce development services. These MOUs will proactively address co-enrollment, co-location, data sharing, and cross marketing (including endorsed mailings to overlapping constituencies) efforts. Via the MOUs, we can map and align funding streams, as well as identify clear roles and responsibilities between our agencies.

Completion Date: Changed from 2020 to 2023

Update/Progress: The COVID-19 crisis and its impact on Hoosiers across the state in 2020 and 2021 led to a need for many of Indiana's state agencies to focus on the utilization of CARES Act funds to more diligently implement enhanced programs to meet immediate needs. As such, planning for many of the activities outlined in this strategy were put on hold. However, there is a multi-agency Data Share Agreement that has been put in place to help move the work of the Applied Workforce Data System project forward. Additionally, the DWD began to rethink how their portion of the state's Workforce Ready Grant program was being implemented. Prior to the pandemic, an individual was required to go through an online portal through NextLevelJobs.org to sign up for the program. This required a level of

self-efficacy that some individuals that were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic might not have had. In order to help more Hoosier citizens, eligibility for the program could be done through our local AJCs (WorkOne) with required co-enrollment in a WIOA program or other services provided by the WorkOne.

Throughout 2022 and 2023 state agencies will continue to work through other aspects within this strategy to include co-enrollment, co-location, and cross marketing/training in additional programs highlighted throughout the State Plan.

Strategy 2.3: Indiana's state agencies will create a digital catalog of each state and federal workforce program's eligibility requirements, determination process, functions, allowances, and options.

Completion Date: Changed from 2020 to 2022

Update/Progress: This strategy will be addressed during 2022.

Strategy 2.4: We will leverage Governor Holcomb's work on the American Workforce Policy Advisory Board, initiated by the White House, to create an effective data charter between the state agencies represented on the Governor's Workforce Cabinet. This will facilitate cross-agency data analysis through our state's Management Performance Hub. We can leverage sharing our data to better understand how our different policies are working together systematically to improve Hoosiers' lives. We can also disaggregate the data based upon subgroups and target populations.

Completion Date: Changed from 2020 to 2022

Update/Progress: The state has begun to rethink how we communicate available programs and occupations to those receiving unemployment insurance benefits, through the Applied Workforce Data System project. There is a multi-agency Data Share Agreement that has been put in place to help move the work of the Applied Workforce Data System project forward. While this project is currently focused on individuals that are unemployed, the target populations this system will serve will continue to expand throughout 2022 and 2023. By utilizing data from education and workforce agencies throughout the state, we can better understand services, programs, and occupations that are available to individuals and tailor recommended services to the individual. Currently, this is being done through banner ads within an unemployment insurance claimants homepage. However, this work will continue to evolve into an online portal that may be accessed by any Hoosier trying to find programs or occupations tailored to a number of factors specific to them.

Strategy 2.5: Where appropriate, state institutions and entities that provide education and training programs, as well as social services, should co-locate to better pool resources and align their services. We will increase the number of co-located offices and incorporate new strategies to increase referrals between partner agencies. Co-location of services can be within a physical space, but this can also

include entities and organizations partnering to offer mobile and virtual services, as well as embedding staff members or using itinerant staffing models, in various hubs of activity and offices.

Completion Date: 2022

Update/Progress: Co-location at the local regional level continues to expand; however, COVID has changed the idea of co-location. We are continuing to explore ways to virtually meet with CORE partners to meet the needs of customers and develop stronger cost sharing agreements. A newly developed tool (Virtual Client Engagement) will be used to help foster greater collaboration with WIOA partners in an effort to provide more seamless service. This tool will further the idea that there is “no wrong door” to enter the One Stop system.

Indiana has also invested in new or upgraded digital tools and resources to provide greater access to services through a self-service model. These tools provide opportunities for partners to direct clients to digital resources that can benefit them. As an example, we have made significant upgrades to Indiana Career Explore to provide greater access to assessments and career exploration for various types of participants from K-12 to Adults. The State also implemented a new job search tool, Hoosier Talent Network, that allows participants to complete a resume and then through AI, support greater job and skill matching to employers.

Strategy 2.6: State agencies will coordinate all of their outreach personnel to co-locate services. This will require outreach personnel to be mobile throughout their region in an effort to spend time in hubs of activity throughout – such as WorkOnes, schools, community centers, libraries, chambers of commerce and businesses, and city halls. These hubs will offer expanded business hours, drop-off childcare, public transit access, and social service consults, whenever possible. Embedding staff or using an itinerant staffing model would create co-location of various programs and services to reach a greater number of Hoosiers.

Completion Date: 2023

Update/Progress: This strategy will be addressed during 2022 and 2023.

Strategy 2.7: Integrating services requires system-wide professional development and cross-training on the basic functions, allowances, and requirements of the various programs for both leadership, outreach personnel, and front-line staff. Cross-training will equip front-line and outreach staff and managers, as well as the leaders of the state agencies, with foundational information needed to respond to the wide range of Hoosiers’ needs. This will allow outreach and front-line personnel to offer a true one-stop option with concierge-like service.

Completion Date: 2022

Update/Progress: Working with the USDOL partners, DWD created a roadmap for agency cross training for direct service staff and are currently seeking funding for curriculum development and implementation. We did receive a USDOL technical assistance grant that helped us to create this roadmap and efforts will expand from here. We will assure accessibility of the training by housing it on VR's LMI.

DWD developed Workforce Development Board member training that is assessable to all Workforce Board members (this training was completed at the end of 2021) and we are in the process of creating case management workforce training that will be completed by end of 2022. We have made several upgrades to the ETPL and ICE to connect jobs to training while job seekers are exploring careers and training opportunities. Equity and inclusion trainings have been done at the agency level. Local boards have been provided some professional development on this in coordination with Core partners. Diversity and inclusion training has been done at the agency level and continues to occur at the WorkOne staff level by the WBDs. Additional work to address this strategy will continue throughout 2022.

Strategy 2.8: To increase both co-enrollment and co-location, regions or communities experiencing success will provide professional development to help partners replicate and build on successes.

Completion Date: Changed from 2022 to 2023

Update/Progress: This strategy will be addressed during 2022.

Strategy 2.9: Indiana will collapse all of the intake processes into one common intake across all programs. This common intake will be accessible both in-person and online. Simplifying the intake process will allow current and future Hoosiers to connect to the system quickly and efficiently and obtain the appropriate mix of services to advance them along a pathway to economic mobility.

Completion Date: 2022

Update/Progress: DWD continues to work towards the goal of creating a common intake across programs both in person physically and virtually. In PY21 and PY22 we developed and implemented a tool to create and conduct appointments, share and sign documents, and communicate with customers safely and securely. This tool does not serve as a case management system, but rather a single point of entry system for engagement. We will work to expand this tool to WIOA Title II partners in PY22 and PY23 as our first step in coordinating a common intake process among partners. These efforts will not only allow us to support opportunities for virtual engagement, but also enhance referral tracking to partners and more seamless service to the customer.

Strategy 2.10: The Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) will leverage the Next Level Broadband program to improve the digital infrastructure throughout the state. OCRA will work with the Indiana

Department of Education on the use of E-RATE to ensure libraries and schools serve as internet hubs in every community.

Completion Date: Changed from 2022 to 2023

Update/Progress: The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for additional broadband infrastructure throughout the state. While additional work is needed to move this strategy forward in full, Indiana recognized the need for continued broadband expansion by increasing the state's Next Level Connections efforts from \$200M over the biennium to \$250M in the biennial budget that was approved during the 2021 legislative session.

Indiana will continue to work toward the integration of the state's broadband expansion efforts and those available within the federal E-RATE program through the remainder of the implementation of the State Plan.

Strategy 2.11: Indiana will create a pilot for a few regions to test consumer-driven operations (e.g., shifting hours of operation to evenings or Saturdays potentially to align with the volume of traffic or creating virtual chat resources for those unable to go to the office). Through this pilot, the regions will determine the costs and benefits of staggering times, how to communicate the change in hours, and the coordination with administrative timelines and requirements.

Completion Date: 2022

Update/Progress: WorkOnes throughout the state have adopted a more consumer-driven service model. Hoosier job seekers now have more flexibility than ever when it comes to accessing services. The COVID-19 crisis provided an opportunity to further evaluate strategies for providing more options for consumers to access services and further re-evaluate models for conducting business, which was the intent of this strategy. In the early days of COVID, Indiana determined very quickly that we needed new models for service delivery that would provide services to a significantly greater population in an environment where the ability to safely deliver traditional in-person services to tens of thousands of unemployed or underemployed workers was limited. The substantial increase in eligible participants prompted an urgent need to develop models for and make a significant shift to virtual delivery to effectively meet the demand for career and training services resulting from the COVID crisis. In response to this need, in addition to incorporate some of the pilots originally proposed as a part of Strategy 2.11, DWD and regional workforce boards incorporated virtual services offerings to both connect with customers and provide expanded opportunities for self-service for those customers requiring fewer intensive supports. Additional examples are included below.

In pilot Region 1 extended hours of operation were implemented beginning in 2021. They, and all other regions, implemented virtual service options designed to leverage technology to meet customers where they are.

Extended Hours of Operation Pilot – Region 1

Select WorkOne Northwest Indiana offices now provide extended hours once per week and on Saturdays. Five of nine WorkOne Centers in Region 1 offer extended hours at least once per week. Extended hours are based upon needs of the local community, demand for services, and availability based on location restrictions. Saturday hours have been added at the Portage location in addition to extended hours on Tuesdays.

Staff Deployed to Partner Locations

Additionally, Region 1 has piloted deploying staff to partner community organizations. Career Advisors serve customers at local library branches and community centers. The role of career path facilitators embedded in adult education partner locations has been expanded using WIOA adult funds. This provides adult education students access to workforce development services and career guidance at adult learning centers, which are routinely accessible evenings and Saturdays. Adult ed teachers are also embedded in WorkOne offices during extended hours of operation. This expands partnerships and access, and also allows for broader one-stop service provision to customers with workforce and education needs.

Increased costs associated with extended hours and staffing changes are being assessed. Staffing has been accomplished through flexing schedules to avoid the need for overtime. Some additional facilities costs are anticipated (i.e., power, heating, cooling, water usage), but these costs are considered negligible compared to the community benefit.

Virtual Service Delivery Options – DWD and All Regions:

- The Department of Workforce Development rolled out a virtual solutions team, which includes a hotline and chat option to answer customer questions and help direct them to the right services to meet their needs, including referral to WorkOne offices or other partners. The virtual services team is available beyond traditional business hours to allow increased access. In 2022, DWD will continue to expand services in this area through further development of a virtual career center, including virtual assistant chatbot and smart, guided pathways for users accessing the Next Level Jobs website.
- The Department of Workforce Development implemented a Virtual Client Engagement (VCE) tool while the local regions implemented virtual access for career engagement with the One Stop (WorkOne) Centers. The VCE creates a universal door into the One Stop system. It provides real-time access to workforce specialists who can assess customer needs and then immediately connect/refer the customer across all partners.
- In pilot Region 1, youth Career Advisors provide career counseling services via Zoom, telephonic counseling, and instant messaging. A partnership with 220 Leadership provides virtual courses and learning tracks to assist youth in becoming work ready. Virtual service delivery gives youth an opportunity to gain skills needed for employment without the requirement of an onsite work experience. Skills assessments for youth are made available through a virtual SIMS platform, wherein youth can enter a virtual workplace and demonstrate skills. The experience culminates in a report to a Career Advisor indicating skills strengths and areas for improvement to assist in

selecting an appropriately aligned work experience. Costs associated with 220 Leadership are absorbed by the region's youth service provider, Goodwill, as part of its contract. WorkOne Northwest Indiana acquired the SIMS platform at a cost of less than \$10,000.

- Region 2 purchased Zoom licenses to support virtual delivery of programmatic work. All workshops, with the exception of computer basics, are available to customers virtually. Laptops and cell phones have been provided to all staff, increasing the capacity to serve customers without being place-bound.
- Region 3 has added virtual and telephonic options for consumers to engage with DWD and local staff. Virtual workshops are offered and the region has increased its social media communication presence, with minimal cost impact.
- Region 4 has incorporated virtual service options, virtual workshops, and virtual appointment scheduling using the Acuity platform at an annual cost of \$300. The region also utilizes the Hoosier Heartland Referral System to facilitate referrals between and among partner agencies, ensuring that customers receive all services they need to be successful. Region 5 continues to evaluate chat and virtual service options, and has staff available to meet with customers, as needed, before or after regular hours of operation on an individualized basis.
- Region 6 has proactively offered telephonic and virtual career counseling /case management during regular business hours since the onset of the pandemic. The region has kiosks in several locations and is in the process of implementing new mobile kiosks/pods in three locations throughout the region as well as partnering with community organizations (i.e., libraries, government centers, or retailers) to provide access to telecoaching services. Plans are in place to pilot placement of kiosks/pods in Portland, Richmond, and Winchester. A mobile career coaching team represents the WorkOne at community events in the evenings and weekends, as needed.
- Region 7 is evaluating the use of video chat services in 2022. The region temporarily implemented Saturday hours at the WorkOne Terre Haute location but experienced little to no use by the public during these times. As a result, extended hours are not anticipated going forward.
- Region 8 offers virtual appointments. WorkOne Career Advisors routinely flex their work schedules to meet virtually with specific clients who are unable to visit the office during regular business hours. Region 9 provides virtual services as well as services by appointment during regular hours of operation. Region 10 has added virtual service options but has not made changes to operational hours. Region 11 has explored stationing staff members at local libraries during evening hours to provide services to individuals who cannot visit a WorkOne office during normal business hours, but has not implemented this practice. Virtual and telephonic assistance is available to customers. Region 12 provides both virtual and in-person services to customers during regular business hours.

Strategy 2.12: Indiana will develop an automated, common case management system that operates across state and federal programs.

Completion Date: 2024

Update/Progress: This strategy will be addressed during 2022 and 2023.

Goal 3: Align programs towards creating a healthy, engaged, and talented citizen

Strategy 3.1: In order to reorient our focus towards early intervention services, we will use our state data charter agreements to target programs towards specific Hoosiers.

Completion Date: Changed from 2020 to 2023

Update/Progress: The state has begun to rethink how we communicate available programs and occupations to those receiving unemployment insurance benefits, through the Applied Workforce Data System project. There is a multi-agency Data Share Agreement that has been put in place to help move the work of the Applied Workforce Data System project forward. While this project is currently focused on individuals that are unemployed, the target populations this system will serve will continue to expand throughout 2022 and 2023. By utilizing data from education and workforce agencies throughout the state, we can better understand services, programs, and occupations that are available to individuals and tailor recommended services to the individual. Currently, this is being done through banner ads within an unemployment insurance claimants homepage. However, this work will continue to evolve into an online portal that may be accessed by any Hoosier trying to find programs or occupations tailored to a number of factors specific to them.

Strategy 3.2: The Commission for Higher Education will work to expand the definition of postsecondary attainment to encompass any and all quality learning after high school, including industry-recognized certifications and credentials, to embrace the right fit and the right time for each Hoosier.

Completion Date: Changed from 2020 to 2023

Update/Progress: Work has continued to change the narrative around the state's 60% postsecondary attainment rate to include any quality credential beyond a high school diploma rather than just a degree. A focus on the immediate needs of serving Hoosiers during the COVID-19 pandemic forced the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) to postpone work to determine state specific data rather than relying on estimates from Lumina's *Stronger Nation* report. The CHE plans to partner with state agencies that include GWC, DWD, MPH, PLA, and other stakeholders to obtain industry-recognized certification data for recent graduates to include in the state's calculation of its postsecondary attainment rate.

Strategy 3.3: One of Governor Holcomb's policy pillars is to expand early education throughout the state. TANF currently funds childcare and early education, but we need to look to other funding streams that could assist with offsetting these costs for any Hoosier earning up to 200% of the federal poverty line and maximize our Child Care and Development Fund (Federal Program) dollars.

Completion Date: Changed from 2022 to 2023

Update/Progress: Through legislation that is part of Governor Holcomb's 2022 legislative agenda, Indiana will focus efforts on strengthening early learning opportunities with a particular emphasis on better preparing students for kindergarten. The Department of Education (DOE) will establish an Office of Kindergarten Readiness to partner with the early childhood team at the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) and a revised Early Learning Advisory Committee (ELAC) will be established to support kindergarten readiness.

Throughout the pandemic, with the support of federal funds, Indiana has been able to provide families that were on the waitlist for childcare support with those services. Additionally, a new tool has been developed by the early childhood team at FSSA to provide Hoosier citizens with ability to see the number of childcare seats available throughout the state.

Work will continue throughout the implementation of the State Plan to better understand and provide quality early learning opportunities across the state.

Strategy 3.4: The Office of Career and Technical Education will be redesigning CTE courses and programs to have more industry relevance and alignment with postsecondary education. CTE will have greater quality, consistency, and intentionality than it has in the past, as well as better integrate academic and technical knowledge skills in CTE courses. During middle and high school, students will have the opportunity to earn the content necessary to be enrolled in a postsecondary education or training program or to be employed in a minimally middle-skill job with a career trajectory.

Completion Date: 2022

Update/Progress: Indiana has spent the past two years redesigning the career pathways that are a part of the state's Career and Technical Education system. The state has redesigned 66 pathways that now have multiple exit points for learners to begin their career or matriculate to postsecondary education with a reduced time to complete. Throughout 2020 and the spring of 2021, 53 of the 66 pathways were redesigned and then made available for students to begin using in the 2021 – 2022 school year. The remaining 13 pathways will become available for use in the 2022 – 2023 school year. These redesigned pathways are more intentionally designed to degree programs at the state's two Perkins-eligible postsecondary institutions, Ivy Tech Community College and Vincennes University.

This redesign was a primary component of Indiana's Combined Plan submission in 2020, and was highlighted by AdvanceCTE as a "Promising Practice." The redesign is also aligned with one of Indiana's key state-funded workforce programs under the Next Level Jobs umbrella, the Workforce Ready Grant.

Now that these programs are available for secondary students and postsecondary students, the state intends to focus on integrating these programs more intentionally in adult education programs to ensure better alignment across the entire education and workforce continuum.

Strategy 3.5: Our in-school youth programs, such as JAG and Youth Assistance, are directed towards preventing Hoosiers from needing Adult Education or other triage services in the future. Pairing those programs closer with career counseling, CTE and academic courses, and work-based learning experiences will help at-risk students start down a career pathway prior to graduation

Completion Date: 2022

Update/Progress: Currently, JAG operates three multi-year programs (serving high school juniors and seniors) in Career and Technical Education Centers in Fort Wayne, Indianapolis and Bloomington. These programs were created at the behest of the CTE center but have served as pilots for implementation in Indiana and with the JAG National network and its other affiliated states.

JAG programs in CTE centers have the unique opportunity to pair the technical skills learned in the respective CTE programming with the universal employability skills needed for today's workforce, learned through JAG; this pairing makes the student graduates more marketable to employer partners established through both the regional JAG programs and CTE employer partners.

In addition to the aforementioned CTE programming, JAG Indiana works with its participants who do not meet graduation requirements to ensure they either return for a 5th year OR are referred to local Adult Education programs. These referrals happen during the 12-month follow-up period by the JAG Specialist, and in PY 2020 and 2021 also occurred through coordinated communication by DWD's Adult Education and Youth Initiatives team, all in efforts to reduce the number of dropouts. For the Class of 2021 student cohort, less than 7% of JAG students did not graduate on time with their peers, with 14% of those who did NOT graduate now enrolled in Adult Education or high school (during the month of December 2021); effectively 22/156 non-graduates are connected to school.

Strategy 3.6: Rethinking transitions for our out-of-school youth and adult programs, they will serve as career bridges, merging adult education practices with technical training. These programs will use the short-term, stackable credentials of value embedded in the career pathways to help Hoosiers access employment that will lead towards a family-sustaining wage for a range of workers in our priority sectors.

Completion Date: 2022

Update/Progress: During the COVID-19 pandemic, many training programs halted enrollment and/or participation or moved to a hybrid instruction style. Additionally, many youth are currently employed, although not necessarily in family-sustaining wages, leading to diminished participation in the state's career training programs for out-of-school youth. However, some local WDB's have created unique staff

positions aimed at creating the education-training-employment bridge with the position of Career Navigator. These staff members are tasked with assessing the youth's "starting place," understanding their long-term goals and then assisting them in creating a plan for short-term and long-term education and employment goals, which often results in utilization of the state's myriad training programs as steppingstones.

In addition to the more formalized engagement in the workforce system (described above), in-school and out-of-school youth (including high school graduates) were granted access to 180 Skills, which served as the state's online training portal for some stackable, industry recognized credentials, including those related to Advanced Manufacturing.

Strategy 3.7: We will use online, in-person, hybrid, and open source course materials to increase access to education and training opportunities, as well as to other support services, such as career coaching and navigation, job search and placement assistance, recruitment services for employers, and referrals and financial aid application assistance for training and educational programs.

Completion Date: 2024

Update/Progress: As a part of its Rapid Recovery efforts to respond to COVID-19 pandemic impacts, the State was able to procure two innovative tools to increase access to job search and placement assistance and training. Hoosier Talent Network, (HTN), a new job matching and career planning site powered by Artificial Intelligence allows jobseekers to quickly find the right job and uncover new opportunities that align well with an applicant's skills. Using sophisticated matching technology, HTN is able to recommend job and career opportunities based on the jobseeker's unique potential. The HTN talent exchange platform also connects employers with a greater array of talent by recommending candidates that have skills that align with employer job opportunities.

The State also procured the 180 Skills training curriculum which provides jobseekers free access to courses and provides employers with an alternative means to train and retain talent through an expansive library of virtual job skills training. The 180 skills platform includes a library of more than 700+ courses across 41 topic areas, and includes an option for employers to develop their own custom career paths based on their unique business needs. Since the program launched in late 2020, more than 16,000 individuals have enrolled in the training platform. In addition, 360 employers are participating, with licenses for the platform issued to more than 31,000 employee trainees (includes both new hire and incumbent workers). Collectively, users have completed nearly 46,000 courses.

At the completion of the 2020 adult education grant competition, DWD awarded funds for a fully online English Language Learner (ELL) program through Monroe County Community Schools. This was a complement to the online ABE program launched in the previous year by Vincennes University. Providers statewide were trained to administer TABE assessments virtually and extensive professional development was offered around the differences between face to face and virtual learning. This new virtual model allows local programs to continue to engage with participants in a hybrid format offering new options for collaboration between adult education providers. In 2021 Indiana added online HiSET

testing for High School Equivalency attainment. With online TABE, curriculum and HiSET testing Hoosiers in Indiana can now remediate and obtain their secondary credential never entering a brick-and-mortar facility.

Goal 4: Maximize state and federal resources through impact-driven programs for Hoosiers.

Strategy 4.1: Increasing co-enrollment of Hoosiers into multiple programs, when applicable, will allow us to better braid funding to meet both Goals 1 and 2. Section III – Operational Elements will delve deeper into implementation of co-enrollment programs

Completion Date: Changed from 2020 to 2023

Update/Progress: As many of Indiana's state agencies were working diligently throughout the pandemic to implement enhanced programs through CARES Act funds in 2020 and 2021, many of the state's efforts were in response to immediate needs created by the COVID-19 crisis. As such, many of the activities outlined in the strategy were put on hold.

However, the Department of Workforce Development began to rethink how their portion of the state's Workforce Ready Grant program was being implemented. Prior to the pandemic, an individual was required to go through an online portal through NextLevelJobs.org to sign up for the program. This required a level of self-efficacy that some individuals that were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic might not have had. In order to help more Hoosier citizens, eligibility for the program could be done through our local AJCs (WorkOne) with required co-enrollment in a WIOA program or other services provided by the WorkOne.

To increase co-enrollment, DWD developed strategic communications to target unemployment insurance customers and specific types of engagement that might be helpful to assist the claimant on their pathway back to work. Resources like Adult Education, training, and job search were strategically shared to engage participants based on their needs

Regional partners at the local level continue to work to establish robust relationships with FSSA as we continue to work towards co-enrollment strategies. Regional partners have engaged in cross training of services to increase knowledge base and share in workforce development strategy development through ongoing partner meetings and collaborations.

Co-enrollment across Wagner Peyser, WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker (DLW), and TAA is already established. Similarly, co-enrollment strategies across homeless Veterans' programming, Wagner Peyser, WIOA Adult, WIOA DLW, and JVSG are also established practices.

Title II partners at both the State and local Workforce Board levels have established relationships with the school systems in their areas to refer and deliver services to students. HB 13-13 is in place. The

legislation focuses on DWD doing outreach to all high school completers with alternative diplomas from 2007 forward.

Virtual Services and technology are paving the way for better and more seamless referrals and coordination between partners, programs and resources. These virtual services at the State and local level expand access and create a “no wrong door” for entering the One Stop system. The State’s virtual solutions provide accessibility to all services. We will continue to work toward a common intake and perhaps even a common case management system across all partners.

DWD recently issued a co-enrollment policy encouraging strategic co-enrollment. This approach facilitates service delivery alignment and encourages the braiding of resources to address the training and employment needs of job seekers and business customers at the local level. Co-enrollment should be customer-centered and driven by the individual’s unique barriers to employment. Strategic co-enrollment ensures the participant receives all appropriate services needed for positive outcomes. The strategic co-enrollment policy was developed in addition to the existing mandatory co-enrollment guidance for TAA/WIOA DW. Both policies can be found on DWD’s active policy site:

<https://www.in.gov/dwd/compliance-policy/policy/active/>.

Expanding co-enrollment efforts will serve to maximize the efficiency and impact of each program through responsible stewardship of funds. Ensuring that individuals are being served through the programs most appropriate for their needs, can lead to a reduction in the duplication of services, improved outcomes, and an increase in the number of participants served through each funding stream. The partners are keeping in mind that co-enrollment can range from being a reportable individual in a specific program up to and including full activation as a participant in the program.

Throughout 2022 and 2023 state agencies will continue to work through other aspects within this strategy to include co-enrollment, co-location, and cross marketing/training in additional programs highlighted throughout the State Plan.

Strategy 4.2: Indiana needs to ensure that our state programs are seamlessly aligned to and complementary of our federal programs, particularly in our economic development activities. As we recruit individuals or businesses to Indiana through various state initiatives, we must have deliberate alignment with our talent development programs.

Completion Date: Changed from 2020 to 2022

Update/Progress: Work has begun on this strategy with the development of a redesigned Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) process that is a part of the state’s implementation of the federal Perkins program. In July 2021, the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet (GWC) and the Office of Career and Technical Education within the GWC announced to the state’s local CTE Directors that a new CLNA process would be required throughout the fall of 2021 and spring of 2022. This new process would include a set of activities in lieu of simply answering the CLNA questions that were included in the initial State Plan submission.

Chief among these activities was a required Regional Collaboration Meeting that was facilitated by the Regional Workforce Development Boards that included economic development, employers, adult education, educators, and the secondary and postsecondary Perkins-eligible recipients within the region. This allowed the parties involved to discuss programs that were available across the talent development continuum within the region as well as how those programs were aligned to employer and economic development needs.

Additionally, the state launched a \$500M grant program through the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) in 2021 geared toward regional collaboration efforts amongst local government, employers, educators, etc. with a focus on building more aligned talent development programs toward regional economic needs as well as quality of place efforts.

The IEDC has also recently launched Smart Manufacturing Readiness grants to help support employers transitioning to Industry 4.0 Technologies. The GWC plans to further align education and training efforts with economic development activity by instituting a similar initiative, Education Readiness grants. These grants will provide an opportunity for Indiana's secondary and postsecondary Perkins eligible recipients to purchase similar equipment to that of employers in their region using the Manufacturing Readiness grants.

Better integration of economic development into the state's talent development efforts will continue throughout the implementation of the State Plan.

Strategy 4.3: By 2022, our goal is to increase the number of people co-enrolled in programs as appropriate and necessary for the customer. (This strategy was re-written to depict more accurately the intention of co-enrollment).

Completion Date: Changed from 2022 to 2023

Update/Progress: As many of Indiana's state agencies were working diligently throughout the pandemic to implement enhanced programs through CARES Act funds in 2020 and 2021, many of the state's efforts were in response to immediate needs created by the COVID-19 crisis. As such, many of the activities outlined in the strategy were put on hold.

However, the Department of Workforce Development began to rethink how their portion of the state's Workforce Ready Grant program was being implemented. Prior to the pandemic, an individual was required to go through an online portal through NextLevelJobs.org to sign up for the program. This required a level of self-efficacy that some individuals that were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic might not have had. In order to help more Hoosier citizens, eligibility for the program could be done through our local AJCs (WorkOne) with required co-enrollment in a WIOA program or other services provided by the WorkOne.

To increase co-enrollment, DWD developed strategic communications to target unemployment insurance customers and specific types of engagement that might be helpful to assist the claimant on their pathway back to work. Resources like Adult Education, training, and job search were strategically shared to engage participants based on their needs.

Regional partners at the local level continue to work to establish robust relationships with FSSA as we continue to work towards co-enrollment strategies. Regional partners have engaged in cross training of services to increase knowledge base and share in workforce development strategy development through ongoing partner meetings and collaborations.

Co-enrollment across Wagner Peyser, WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker (DLW), and TAA is already established. Similarly, co-enrollment strategies across homeless Veterans' programming, Wagner Peyser, WIOA Adult, WIOA DLW, and JVS are also established practices.

Title II partners at both the State and local Workforce Board levels have established relationships with the school systems in their areas to refer and deliver services to students. HB 13-13 is in place. The legislation focuses on DWD doing outreach to all high school completers with alternative diplomas from 2007 forward.

Virtual Services and technology are paving the way for better and more seamless referrals and coordination between partners, programs and resources. These virtual services at the State and local level expand access and create a "no wrong door" for entering the One Stop system. The State's virtual solutions provide accessibility to all services. We will continue to work toward a common intake and perhaps even a common case management system across all partners.

DWD recently issued a co-enrollment policy encouraging strategic co-enrollment. This approach facilitates service delivery alignment and encourages the braiding of resources to address the training and employment needs of job seekers and business customers at the local level. Co-enrollment should be customer-centered and driven by the individual's unique barriers to employment. Strategic co-enrollment ensures the participant receives all appropriate services needed for positive outcomes. The strategic co-enrollment policy was developed in addition to the existing mandatory co-enrollment guidance for TAA/WIOA DW. Both policies can be found on DWD's active policy site: <https://www.in.gov/dwd/compliance-policy/policy/active/>.

Expanding co-enrollment efforts will serve to maximize the efficiency and impact of each program through responsible stewardship of funds. Ensuring that individuals are being served through the programs most appropriate for their needs, can lead to a reduction in the duplication of services, improved outcomes, and an increase in the number of participants served through each funding stream. The partners are keeping in mind that co-enrollment can range from being a reportable individual in a specific program up to and including full activation as a participant in the program.

Throughout 2022 and 2023 state agencies will continue to work through other aspects within this strategy to include co-enrollment, co-location, and cross marketing/training in additional programs highlighted throughout the State Plan.

Strategy 4.4: As a state, we need to evaluate our programs not based on access or completion alone, but through the impact a program has on Hoosiers' lives. Skill attainment, completion rates, and conferred credentials should be assessed, but those will no longer be the only measures of successful workforce development programs. We have to balance our evaluations of the inputs and outputs from programs with outcomes.

Completion Date: Changed from 2022 to 2023

Update/Progress: For years the state has utilized wage and demand data to determine program eligibility for the state's key workforce program, Next Level Jobs. Additionally, outcome data such as completion rate, placement rate, and wage placement data has been utilized to evaluate programs on Indiana's Eligible Training Provider List. In early 2019, the GWC was working toward evaluating both the state's Next Level Jobs programs as well as having conversations on how to possibly amend the ETPL criteria.

As many of Indiana's state agencies were working diligently throughout the pandemic to implement enhanced programs through CARES Act funds in 2020 and 2021, many of the state's efforts were in response to immediate needs created by the COVID-19 crisis. As such, many of the activities outlined in the strategy were put on hold.

Throughout 2022 and 2023 state agencies will continue to work through this strategy. The multi-agency data sharing agreement can be leveraged to look at outcome data and enrollment from most of the state's education and training programs.

Strategy 4.5: Indiana will look to other states to learn best practices to help improve our state and federal programs.

Completion Date: Changed from 2022 to 2023

Update/Progress: As many of Indiana's state agencies were working diligently throughout the pandemic to implement enhanced programs through CARES Act funds in 2020 and 2021, many of the state's efforts were in response to immediate needs created by the COVID-19 crisis. As such, many of the activities outlined in the strategy were put on hold.

Many of Indiana's agencies and programs were engaged in various virtual meetings throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The GWC's Executive Director was asked to testify along with colleagues from the State of Colorado regarding WIOA reauthorization. This gave Indiana the chance to hear how another state was leveraging WIOA to support workforce efforts. Additionally, the GWC had the opportunity to present with other states at National Governors Association conferences and AdvanceCTE conferences.

As the GWC worked to revise the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) for Perkins eligible recipients, Indiana partnered with Ohio to learn more about their Equity Labs. Throughout 2020 and 2021, the state continued to learn more and work toward a similar strategy. Eventually Indiana

developed their own Equity Lab, which was included as a part of this year's Certified Local Needs Assessment for both secondary and postsecondary Perkins eligible programs.

Throughout 2022 and 2023 state agencies will continue to work through this strategy as we continue to learn from other states.

Strategy 4.6: Once we have established what our impactful programs are, we can actively improve our required programs or sunset our low-impact, discretionary workforce programs to reinvest that funding towards high-impact programs or funding wraparound supports to ensure Hoosiers can earn a credential to access a higher wage and move along his or her career pathway.

Completion Date: Changed from 2022 to 2023

Update/Progress: As many of Indiana's state agencies were working diligently throughout the pandemic to implement enhanced programs through CARES Act funds in 2020 and 2021, many of the state's efforts were in response to immediate needs created by the COVID-19 crisis. As such, many of the activities outlined in the strategy were put on hold.

Throughout 2022 and 2023 state agencies will continue to work through this strategy simultaneously to Strategy 4.4. The multi-agency data sharing agreement can be leveraged to look at outcome data and enrollment from most of the state's education and training programs.

Strategy 4.7: Over the next four years, state leaders from the executive and legislative branches will evaluate in which state agencies the Core and Partner programs are housed with the goal of streamlining the talent development system. Restructuring at the state level will also help facilitate increasing co-location of services at the local level.

Completion Date: 2024

Update/Progress: As many of Indiana's state agencies were working diligently throughout the pandemic to implement enhanced programs through CARES Act funds in 2020 and 2021, many of the state's efforts were in response to immediate needs created by the COVID-19 crisis. As such, many of the activities outlined in the strategy were put on hold.

Throughout 2022 and 2023 state agencies will continue to work through this strategy to further aligning programs with agency missions.

Strategy 4.8: As Indiana's economy changes with the rapid pace of national and international markets, it will be crucial to ensure that our designated workforce regions are continuously updated and realigned, as needed. State agencies will revisit which counties currently comprise our Economic Growth Regions.

Completion Date: 2024

Update/Progress: As many of Indiana's state agencies were working diligently throughout the pandemic to implement enhanced programs through CARES Act funds in 2020 and 2021, many of the state's efforts were in response to immediate needs created by the COVID-19 crisis. As such, many of the activities outlined in the strategy were put on hold.

Throughout 2022 and 2023 state agencies will continue to work through this strategy to identify any shifts within regional economies that may have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Shifts in those economies, population, and commuting patterns could impact Indiana's Economic Growth Regions identified in the next State Plan.

Goal 5. Foster impactful relationships between businesses, community partners, and government agencies.

Strategy 5.1: To establish sustainable economic prosperity, we must strategically and efficiently address the economic needs of workers and businesses, which will require deeper engagement and collaboration across the public and private sectors. Based on the 2019 data from the Indiana Chamber of Commerce's Annual Employer Survey of approximately 1,000 businesses, there are partnership opportunities between employers and the public sector currently not being taken advantage

Completion Date: Changed from 2020 to 2023

Update/Progress: COVID-19 elevated the importance of finding strategic and efficient ways to address the needs of workers and businesses requiring the workforce system to provide supports to employers to help address economic fallout and impacts resulting from the pandemic. The crisis clearly challenged, and in many cases, damaged the financial stability of workers and employers, and a comprehensive recovery effort had to include strategies for stabilizing and expanding business, while developing and providing the skilled workforce necessary to enable economic revitalization.

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on businesses ability to hire and retain a skilled workforce resulting in a need for expanded resources to support employer efforts to develop the workforce required to operate. In some industries, the demand placed on businesses to quickly expand its workforce in order to respond to the pandemic (i.e. healthcare, transportation and logistics, technology) has required employers to quickly ramp up training efforts.

As a part of a comprehensive economic recovery strategy, Indiana committed a total of \$20M in CARES Act dollars to support an expanded Employer Training Grant (ETG) program in 2020 and 2021. The Employer Training Grant – Rapid Recovery (ETG-RR) program was developed utilizing the foundation of the successful state-funded ETG program implemented in 2017. The ETG-RR program provided necessary resources to allow employers to quickly train new and upskill existing employees in high demand industries.

Through a combination of the CARES Act funded ETG-RR and state funded ETG programs, Indiana was able to provide nearly \$32M in employer training reimbursements to 702 employers resulting in training of more than 11,300 new and incumbent workers. Of these funds, more than \$7M was provided to minority-, women- and veteran-owned businesses to support their training needs.

As it looks towards the future and refocuses its efforts on strategic employer outreach, DWD is developing a list of “Top Hoosier Businesses” to prioritize outreach efforts and development of deeper partnerships over the next two years. DWD used a variety of information to inform priority business for outreach efforts including:

- Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) Market Insight data that focuses on growing minority and women’s business enterprises,
- Next Level Jobs (NLJ) Employer Training Grant (ETG) partners, and
- Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) resources across small, medium, and large sized businesses.

Using the Top Hoosier Business List as a guide, roughly 500 Hoosier businesses will be included in invigorated outreach strategies for the next two years.

The State is also advancing another innovative strategy to engage and collaborate with employers in the public and private sectors. Through a partnership between the Serve Indiana and the DWD Employer Engagement division, the State is convening the Empathy Sector as a leader of volunteerism and service and the role those forces play in increasing empathy. Through this program, the State will assist employers in engaging employees as volunteers in communities through relationships and equity, and connect employers with tools to help develop, grow, or strengthen their employee-based volunteer program(s).

This unique partnership recognizes that employees seek meaningful connections with their community and that employees are placing increasing value on bringing more meaning to their lives through rewarding work. It further recognizes that an employer’s development of and commitment to a service program can have a significant impact on workplace culture and not only provides substantial benefit to the community but can also serve as an important employee recruitment and retention strategy.

For more information about the Empathy Sector strategy visit:

<https://www.in.gov/serveindiana/empathy/>.

Strategy 5.2: In addition to generally increasing business engagement, we must augment our expectation of positive, efficient, and solutions-oriented government partnerships with businesses. In addition to the quantitative strategy we have outlined, this is a qualitative approach (see details in spreadsheet, tab 8)

Completion Date: Changed from 2020 to 2023

Update/Progress: Indiana has deployed a number of strategies during the first two years of the Plan to increase business engagement in the workforce system and further innovative collaboration between

government entities and the business community. Increasing business engagement starts with educating businesses on the services available to them. To increase that awareness, DWD launched a virtual Business Resource Guide to help create a better understanding of Indiana's workforce services. The Resource Guide not only serves to educate employers about the services available to them, but it also serves as a lead generator for business services staff to follow up with employers.

The Next Level Jobs Employer Training Grant (ETG) continues to be a successful model for engaging businesses. As mentioned previously, with increased funding for the program made possible by the CARES Act, Indiana was able to double the number of employers receiving reimbursement through an ETG to more than 700 between July 1, 2020, and December 31, 2020. In addition to being able to support employers' workforce training efforts through ETG, the program serves as an excellent lead generator for local workforce business services staff to share information about other services.

As a part of its Rapid Recovery efforts to respond to COVID-19 pandemic impacts, the State was also able to procure two innovative tools to support employer hiring and training needs. A new talent matching platform, Hoosier Talent Network, (HTN) was developed and launched in 2021, with over 17,000 candidates, and 3,000+ businesses in the system currently, to enhance business connectivity and engagement. Powered by advanced skills matching technology, the HTN talent exchange platform allows the State to better support matching employers and talent, by helping individuals identify job opportunities in a rapidly shifting labor market and connecting employers with talent to meet their hiring needs.

The State also procured the 180 Skills training curriculum to provide employers with an alternative means to train and retain talent through an expansive library of virtual job skills training. The training platform provides employers with an opportunity to increase the skills of workers throughout their organizations, give employees valuable skills they can use at work, increase employee retention and grow their business. The 180 skills platform includes a library of more than 700+ courses across 41 topic areas, and includes an option for employers to develop their own custom career paths based on their unique business needs. Since the program launched in late 2020, more than 360 employers are participating with licenses for the platform issued to more than 31,000 employee trainees (includes both new hire and incumbent workers).

In addition, Indiana launched a transformational public-private partnership opportunity through the Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI) to further economic recovery from the pandemic and advance the State's efforts to make Indiana a destination for talent and business growth. Under the leadership of Governor Holcomb and the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC), this initiative incentivized neighboring counties, cities, and towns to partner to create a shared vision for their future, mapping out the programs, initiatives and projects that are critical for them to retain talent today and attract the workforce of tomorrow.

In December 2021, the IEDC awarded \$500 million from state appropriations in grants to seventeen regions, representing all 92 Indiana counties. To be considered for funding, regions had to develop data-driven, actionable and sustainable development plans that outlined strategies focused on improving the quality of place, quality of life and quality of opportunity within their communities. READI is expected to

attract at least \$2 billion of local public, private and philanthropic match funding. For more information about the READI initiative visit: <https://www.iedc.in.gov/program/indiana-readi/overview>.

Strategy 5.3: Indiana will seek to create strategic partnerships with the Institute of Workforce Excellence (IWE) under the state Chamber of Commerce, postsecondary institutions, and other sector organizations. These organizations have recently started scaling their efforts regarding talent attraction and skills growth throughout the state. They are currently focusing on identifying and addressing the challenges of developing, attracting, and retaining the kinds of technically and technologically skilled talent our state's leading sectors of economic opportunity will require for their continued growth.

Completion Date: 2022

Update/Progress: The state has partnered with the state Chamber of Commerce and its Institute for Workforce Excellence (IWE) on a number of activities throughout 2020 and 2021. The Executive Director of the Governor's Workforce Cabinet is a member of the IWE's Governing Board, and there are several members of the Governor's Workforce Cabinet, including three state agency heads, that are a part of the IWE's Advisory Council. Through these efforts, the Talent Resource Navigator tool for employers is set to launch at some point in 2022. Through this tool, employers will be able to identify local, state, and federal resources that are available to them in the areas of talent recruitment, talent retention, and talent development. Additionally, the state and the IWE have partnered to scale the EARN Indiana work-based learning program for postsecondary students into the high school space through a pilot program that is set to launch in 2022.

Indiana and the state Chamber of Commerce will continue to partner throughout the implementation of the State Plan to better facilitate employer connections with the education and workforce system.

Strategy 5.4: Seamlessly integrating the full work-based learning continuum into the Indiana talent development system will allow for both businesses and constituents to find sustainable success. As opportunities continue to grow for our students, we must also ensure that a comparable work-based learning system for adults also increases. These experiences must include on-the-job training, federally-recognized apprenticeships, internships, job shadow experiences, State Earn and Learn programs through our Office of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship, and incumbent worker training.

Completion Date: Changed from 2022 to 2023

Update/Progress: Since creation of the State Plan, Indiana's Office of Work Based Learning and Apprenticeship (OWBLA) expansion continues to be supported by a collaborative effort between OWBLA, Indiana CTE, IN Department of Education, IN Department of Workforce Development, and regional Workforce Development Boards. To further these efforts, OWBLA continues to convene key stakeholders from multiple agencies, organizations, education partners and businesses on a regular basis to discuss strategies to increase comprehensive, high quality WBL programs.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented a variety of challenges and required some shifting of resources throughout 2020 and 2021 but has also opened up opportunities for growth in Indiana. Like others, given the close work with employers and educators on WBL initiatives, partners were forced to shift and adapt to working virtually and seeing many programs developed impacted by the virtual element. Some RAPs and SEALs were forced to reduce the number of participants to maintain social distancing standards, many sessions were postponed or cancelled completely, and some were able to be flexible and shift towards an entirely virtual or hybrid option(s). Programs through the Indiana Department of Corrections completely ceased operations, while others saw increased interest in attendees but were forced to reduce class sizes in half due to spacing limitations and safety precautions. However, Indiana also saw an increased need and interest in other key economic sectors such as healthcare and advanced manufacturing, and was able to shift resources to assist these in-demand sectors and the individuals being served. Fortunately, the pool of interested individuals and participants in our RAPs and SEALs continued to grow despite the challenges presented by the pandemic.

As of the close of the 2020-2021 program year, Indiana was reporting 18,435 total Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP) with 42 new RAPs during the period. If including the ZA national programs, the total number of active apprentices increased to 20,522 with 6,997 new apprentices during that program year, with a total of 1,155 registered apprenticeship programs being served by Indiana's Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship staff and OWBLA.

During the 2020-2021 program year, Indiana saw significant growth in the number of certified SEAL programs and the total number of individuals enrolled in SEAL programs. In October 2020, Indiana was pleased to celebrate the launch of the 100th SEAL in Horizontal Construction. This SEAL included collaboration amongst 16 partners – six professional organizations, five employers (union and non-union), three schools (high school and community college), and two state agencies and offers high school students seven or more industry certifications and 18 transferable college credits.

The 100th SEAL is a Horizontal Construction program, which encompasses the building of roads, bridges and other structural projects that focus on transit. Participating students earn college credits and industry-recognized credentials while working and learning on the job, in addition to gaining a pathway to advanced degrees in civil construction. This SEAL is also aligned to the proposed Next Level Program of Study through the Office of Career and Technical Education.

Garrett High School in Garrett and Hamilton Heights High School in Arcadia are the first two schools to launch Horizontal Construction SEAL programs and will have a total of 20 students participating the first year. Five more schools will follow in 2021. They are Batesville High School, Lapel High School, Madison High School, New Palestine High School and Penn High School.

In addition to comprehensive work-based learning opportunities and industry-recognized credentials, students in the Horizontal Construction SEAL will earn a Heavy Highway Specialist Certificate or a Technical Certificate in Civil Construction, both from Ivy Tech Community College. This program also allows for the direct entry, with advanced standing, into a US DOL registered apprenticeship. By June 2021, OWBLA has successfully launched 138 SEAL programs (33 Adult and 105 Youth programs) with 2,784 participant's total for 2021 only.

The SEAL programs are represented throughout Indiana's identified six key economic high-growth sectors to include:

SEAL Programs as of June 2021	Active Programs
Advanced Manufacturing	38
Agriculture	3
IT / Business	21
Construction	19
Healthcare	35
Transportation / Logistics	20
Other	2
Total	138

Of the 138 active Certified SEAL Programs, 540 current partners were included, and 55 schools represented. As of June 2021, more than an additional 60 youth and adult SEAL programs were in the process of being launched.

Other key initiatives during the Plan period to date include establishing all twelve Workforce Development Boards as registered apprenticeship intermediaries, with each having entered into a sub-recipient grant relationship with DWD in order to develop and scale registered apprenticeship programs in each region across Indiana. The intermediaries are responsible for occupation selection, standards and registration, and reporting to DWD OWBLA. This structure supports State Plan goals to allow regions to drive efforts to attract and retain apprentices for high-wage, high-demand jobs that meet the economic needs of the individual region.

To support these efforts, regions utilize Business Services Representatives and Business Consultants to connect employers to the local WorkOne system, conduct business analysis of local talent needs, and assist in the development of workforce and economic partnerships with businesses. The regional teams support employers creating RAPs and SEALs, as well as provide technical assistance. WDBs also work to identify non-traditional occupations that exhibit the five apprenticeship components and are good candidates from WBL.

Strategy 5.5: From state agencies to local boards, we need common and coordinated outreach to employers. The messages must be synchronized and common across all partners, in their promotion of postsecondary attainment and economic mobility for every Hoosier. Rather than the state spearheading connecting with businesses, the majority of this outreach should occur at the local level, with state backing. The state will focus its efforts instead on helping and supporting our local workforce boards' and partners' strategies to engage with employers. This interagency coordination should help foster increased business involvement as it reduces duplication of efforts, saving valuable resources and reducing businesses' fatigue and weariness with the talent system.

Completion Date: Changed from 2022 to 2023

Update/Progress: To support local workforce board efforts to engage with employers, in 2021, DWD awarded more than \$20 million in state ETG funding to regional workforce boards. This funding, historically managed at the state level, allows local boards to better prioritize and administer the funding for eligible employer training efforts that best align with the needs of their area, with the ETG program continuing to serve as a powerful lead generator to allow the region to offer other business services.

Transitioning more direct administration of the ETG program to the regions will encourage increased engagement at the local level, while allowing DWD to shift into more of a technical assistance role working to provide the regions with the supports, tools and resources necessary to successfully increase employer engagement.

DWD continues to develop Indiana's Business Services Client Relationship Manager (CRM) to facilitate better tracking of employer partners and allow for more seamless communications among those engaging with businesses. The CRM currently contains over 17,000 current Business Accounts and over 100 business facing users.

Other tools such as the D&B Optimizer also seek to significantly reduce duplication and provide support to local business services staff through quality matching for data entry in business accounts and providing increased business intelligence with a goal to significantly reduce duplicate business partner entries statewide.

Strategy 5.6: The state will work with the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, local chambers, main street organizations, county and township trustees, business services divisions within the Workforce Development Boards, and other associations to help regularly disseminate information about state and federal programs.

Completion Date: Changed from 2022 to 2023

Update/Progress: The state continues to incorporate strategies for regular dissemination of information about state and federal programs, and other resources available to support increased business engagement. Central to this effort was development of a new virtual Business Resource Guide to help create a better understanding of Indiana's workforce services. The Resource Guide not only serves to educate employers about the services available to them, but it also serves as a lead generator for business services staff to follow up with employers. In 2022, the state will build on the Resource Guide through a redesign of the Next Level Jobs site, which will feature additional resources for businesses to support their efforts to attract, train and retain talent.

DWD hosts monthly virtual business service meetings with regional business services staff to share information, provide technical assistance and facilitate discussions around best practices. The state also communicates with local business services teams through a robust Microsoft Teams site to promote real-time collaboration, provide regular, ongoing communications, awareness, and sharing of resources.

A recent partnership between the GWC, DWD and the Indiana Chamber of Commerce Institute for Workforce Excellence will support increased awareness, participation and utilization of high-priority, state sponsored workforce development programs, resources, and services by the Indiana business community. Through the IWE's planned launch of an Online Talent Resource Navigator in Spring 2022, the Institute will be able to better connect employers to the State's priority workforce development resources. In addition to connecting employers to a clearinghouse of promising practices, programs and partners that can help businesses thrive, the Navigator will also include personalized technical assistance to employers through a concierge service managed by Chamber staff to facilitate "warm" handoffs between employers and partners. Through this partnership, the Chamber will connect interested employers with relevant program / service and workforce contacts identified by the State.

Strategy 5.7: Through state and local business conferences, Indiana's Institute for Workforce Excellence, and the state's coordinated communications with businesses, we will showcase businesses exhibiting innovative talent development practices to serve as both leaders and exemplars for others. We will highlight three different groundbreaking approaches from businesses:

Completion Date: 2024

Update/Progress: The state has always been a willing partner to participate in events hosted by the state Chamber of Commerce and will continue to do so even more now that the Chamber has created the Institute for Workforce Excellence. This past year, representation from the Governor's Workforce Cabinet and the Department of Workforce Development participated on a panel at the Chamber's annual conference. Moving forward, with the impending launch of the Talent Resource Navigator, the Chamber and state will be able to more easily identify industry leaders that are utilizing best practices in their talent development efforts to showcase those to employers across the state.

The state is also beginning to incorporate new strategies to spotlight businesses use of workforce programs and resources to support talent development. Employers leveraging the ETG to develop and upskill new and incumbent workers are featured on the Next Level Jobs website providing quotes regarding what the program has meant for their organization. The state also plans to film testimonials of employers who have successfully utilized other key resources such as the 180 Skills platform and the Hoosier Talent Network.

The partnership between the GWC, DWD and the Indiana Chamber of Commerce Institute for Workforce Excellence will also support an extensive employer outreach campaign to share information with the Chamber's significant network on key resources and services through employer convenings, digital marketing, print publications and social media. Outreach efforts will incorporate showcasing innovative business practices and the employers utilizing them to support talent development.

Throughout 2022, the state plans to heavily promote work-based learning as a strategy to recruit and skill up talent necessary to meet business needs. As a part of this effort, the state will seek employers who have developed and incorporated successful work-based learning programs as a part of their talent recruitment and development strategies to serve as success stories for other businesses.